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WPost

Jailed Red 'Crams' on Democracy

Washington Post Foreign Service

TRIVANDRUM, India, March 5—What does a Communist do to kill time in a bourgeois capitalist prison?

Answer: Read up on parliamentary democracy.

Officials of the U.S. Information Service library here were startled to get a letter two weeks ago requesting books on "the workings of parliamentary democracy" from K. K. Aniruddin, one of the top leaders of the pro-Peking Communist in this key south Indian state of Kerala.

Editor of Daily

Aniruddin, editor of the Communist daily Free Kerala, was arrested in late December as part of a nation-wide crackdown on the Chinese-oriented faction of the Indian Communist Party.

The USIS submitted a sampling of 14 books on democratic ideals and procedures to the police censor at the Trivandrum center jail in response to the request. All of the volumes were passed on to Aniruddin as reading approved by the Indian government. He has since asked for additional American material on economics, public finance and political theory.

Despite his confinement to the central jail, Aniruddin ran as a candidate for a hotly contested state legislature seat in the Kerala elections just concluded. His opponent in the prestige contest for the seat was former Chief Minister R. R. Sankar, running on the ticket of Prime Minister Shastri's governing Congress Party.

"Comrade Aniruddin is perhaps reading these books to prepare himself in case the people should ask us to conduct the government," said State Communist Secretary P. T. Purshottam.

We Have No Objection

If the pro-Peking Communists are able to form a coalition government in Kerala, he added, "we would want the library to continue to be there. It is well known to us. We have no objection to learning about the U.S.A. With the help of this library, anti-Communist people are fighting us, and it is advisable for us to study these allegations."

One of the theories current here is that Aniruddin hopes to draw on the American books in pleading the case for the release of imprisoned Communists elected to the legislature today.